

# Books from Overseas

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## THE FIRST FALANGIST

*[The rise and decline of the Falange, Spain's fascist party, has long been one of the more enigmatic phenomena of modern Europe. An important new book studies the course of Spanish fascism, and our excerpt deals with Primo de Rivera, the first leader—'José Antonio'.]*

DURING the first months of the Falange José Antonio spent most of his time trying to spell out the theoretical premises of his political attitudes, although even among party members there were few who cared to listen to him. According to his philosophy, the individual achieved true significance only when occupied in some noble collective task: "Life is not worth the effort if it is not to be burnt up in the service of a great enterprise." Great enterprises were formed only by the free and enthusiastic union of Individuals. Individuals bound together by historical tradition, material cooperation, and mutual destiny formed a nation.

'A nation could guarantee the freedom of individuals because law and justice could arise only from its historical development and could be enforced only by its superior moral authority. Going one step further, the nation could fulfill its function and maintain the integrity of its institutions only by offering individual citizens a common destiny, to be achieved through a transcendent, national enterprise. That is, the nation was really possible only as Empire. When the nation lost its sense of a transcendent vocation and common destiny, when classes and regions pursued goals of their own, the ethical fabric of national life went to pieces. Social strife, economic misery, and political discord would end only when Spaniards once more forged a common destiny for themselves in the world. . . .

'José Antonio's "destiny in the universal," which he had derived from a concept of Ortega's, had few practical implications. He never made it clear whether the phrase implied a restoration of Spanish cultural dominance or a resuscitation of the Spanish Empire. Although dreams of empire were patently absurd considering Spain's meager resources, José Antonio was not above dreaming. He was apparently convinced that

Europe was entering an area of conflict that would bring great territorial realignments on the Continent and in North Africa. Personally, José Antonio was a repressed Anglophile and even admired Kipling.<sup>1</sup> But as an intellectual, he had absorbed all the antiliberal propaganda of his generation, and, like Ledesma, he believed that the end of the Western liberal order was at hand. If Spain could rejuvenate herself in time to follow the dynamic new nationalist trend, she might greatly increase her territorial holdings and international influence. In private conversations José Antonio later came to talk confidently of absorbing Portugal.

‘José Antonio wanted Spain to make a great historical leap, vaulting feudal backwardness and liberal capitalism at the same time. Apparently he never imagined that it might be the possibilities and not the impracticalities of liberalism that were exciting disturbance in Spain, which had never known an honest system of liberal representation. Rather than trying to help the nation resolve its differences, José Antonio and his colleagues proposed to jam the mechanism of parliamentary government and replace it with an abstract system that few people supported and even fewer understood. He thought that an elite or “creative minority” could lead the nation to greatness. He forgot that an elite can control a resistant majority only by the ruthless and terroristic exercise of power.

‘José Antonio easily won a seat in the Cortes in the elections of 1933, placing second on the Rightist list at Cadiz. Alienated by the corruption of Andalusian politics, he did not play an active role in the new Cortes. Nevertheless, he took great care to make a good impression there, except when it came to the defense of his father’s reputation or record, a matter on which he remained intransigent. He prepared his infrequent speeches carefully, and was very pleased when he could impress such leading orators of the Left as Prieto and Azaña. His eloquence and personal charm won a number of friends for him in the national parliament. The clerical reactionary Ramiro de Maeztu remarked that in elegance of figure and gesture, the leader of the Falange reminded him more of the young Ramsay Macdonald than of Mussolini or Hitler. José Antonio’s antagonistic comrade Juan Antonio Ansaldo used to tell him that he looked the perfect image of a proper president for the International Anti-Fascist League.’

<sup>1</sup> José Antonio’s favorite poem was ‘If,’ which he used to recite in English.

## THE TEMPORAL TO THE ETERNAL

[Professor Arthur O. Lovejoy's new book is concerned with the history of the conceptions of *The Reason, The Ego, Time* and other related concepts, their vogue and influence in German philosophy and their influence today in Bergson's writings.]

'TIME as ordinarily conceived is sundered into separate moments which are perpetually passing away. The past is forever dead and gone, the future is non-existent and uncertain, and the present seems, at most, a bare knife-edge of existence separating these two unrealities, itself scarcely born before it also lapses into nonentity. To many reflective minds in all ages time, so conceived, has seemed a baffling, unintelligible, incredible mode of being, undeserving of the eulogistic epithet of "real," or at all events, not the final and universal attribute of the nature of things. Like Aldous Huxley's Mr. Propter, thousands of weary souls have found time to be a "thing *intrinsically* nightmarish."<sup>1</sup> A great part of the history of Western, as of Eastern, philosophy, therefore, has been a persistent flight from the temporal to the eternal, the quest of an object on which the reason or the imagination might fix itself with the sense of having attained to something that is not merely perduring but immutable, because the very notions of "before" and "after" are inapplicable to it. And of this quest the theory of knowledge under consideration is, on one side, a phase—though, as we shall later see, on another side it is precisely the opposite. But these philosophers sought the object of the quest, like the Blue Bird, at home—not in the remote world of Platonic Ideas or Realm of Essence, nor in a transcendent Aristotelian God, nor—as Spenser does, in the *locus classicus* of this theme in English poetry, the cantos on Mutability with which *The Faerie Queene* ends—in a future eternal Sabbath to which we may aspire:

That . . . time when no more *Change* shall be  
But stedfast rest of all things firmly stayd  
Upon the pillours of Eternity,  
That is contrayr to *Mutabilitie*:  
For all that moveth, doth in *Change* delight:  
But thenceforth all shall rest eternally  
With Him that is the God of Sabbaoth light:  
O! that great Sabbaoth God, grant me that Sabbaoth's sight.

Spenser's "eternity" differed profoundly—as was to be expected from a poet reared in the tradition of Christian philosophy—from the timeless—

<sup>1</sup> *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan* (1939), p. 117.

ness of Plato's Idea or Aristotle's God; the poet's lines were the expression of a hope for the future attainment by individual human souls of a state of being exempt from mutability—which for him (as for Dante) probably meant a changeless beatific contemplation of the perfection—itself eternal—of the Supreme Being.

'Eternity, on the contrary, the philosophers here in question often declare, is already within us; for the Self known directly in intuition is a pure unity, an existence in which there are no parts external to one another, as are—or seem to be—the successive instants of time. Thus Schelling writes:

Because the Ego is indivisible, it is likewise incapable of change. For it cannot be changed by anything external. But if it were self-changed, it would be necessary that one part of it should be determined by another, *i.e.*, it would be divisible. The Ego, therefore, must be always the same, an absolute unity placed beyond the reach of all mutation. . . . One cannot say of it: it was, it will be; but only *it is*. . . . The form of the intellectual intuition of it is eternity.'

*From THE REASON, THE UNDERSTANDING, AND TIME. By Arthur O. Lovejoy. (THE JOHNS HOPKINS PRESS.) LONDON: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. (32s. net.)*

## ANARCHY IN EGYPT

*[Egypt's intellectual and political evolution in the last hundred and fifty years is the subject of a new book from Harvard. Our excerpt covers the crisis months of 1947-8.]*

'EVEN before the United Nations adopted the partition resolution of November 29, 1947, the Egyptian government, together with the other members of the Arab League, had committed itself to resist its application even by force. When the resolution was passed and civil war broke out in Palestine, the Egyptian government believed that the Palestinian Arabs could win by themselves, with indirect assistance from the Arab countries. Together with other member-governments of the League, it took the lead in arousing its people, contributed moneys and arms, and encouraged the organization and dispatch of volunteers. By the spring of 1948, however, events in Palestine took an unexpected turn against the Arabs and it became obvious that the cause would be lost unless the regular armies of the Arab states intervened. The Egyptian government was reluctant to send its army to war; but the tremendous popular agitation which it had helped to incite, the necessity to confront the national issue if the Palestine problem were dropped, pressure from the king who feared the Wafd's

return to power, and expectation of quick success in the war prompted it to overcome its hesitation. Once again the government took the lead in stirring up the enthusiasm of the public by premature announcements of success and reiterated commitments to fight until complete victory was won. But once again its calculations proved wrong. Not only was it impossible to win the war, but it became evident after the first forty days of fighting that every delay in ending hostilities exposed the Arab armies, the Palestinians, and what remained of Palestine to disaster. However, even as the disaster began to materialize, the government lacked the courage to admit failure and end the war. By that time, it was almost completely the prisoner of that *jinn*—mass opinion—which it had so recklessly unbottled.

‘During the whole agitation, the Muslim Brotherhood took advantage of the relaxation of the usual public security controls to collect arms and train its men. When it became evident that the war could not be won, and while the best units of the army were still occupied at the front, the Brotherhood began to plot the complete overthrow of the regime. . . . It succeeded in undermining completely the morale and effectiveness of the police force after killing its chief and battling with it several times. By the autumn of 1948, it became the almost unchallenged master of the streets and was about to deal its *coup de grâce* when the government, in a spurt of determination, outlawed it and ordered its dissolution on the ground of conspiring against the existing order. Indicative of the power that the movement had attained and of the decline of public authority was the fact that the government did not dare arrest the leaders of the Brotherhood or bring them to trial. Not even when the movement retaliated by assassinating the Prime Minister did his successors dare to take such measures. Instead, they resorted to extra-legal means and had the leader and founder of the Brotherhood assassinated.

‘The liquidation of the Palestine war brought to the fore once more the Egyptian national issue which had been pushed aside in the preceding year-and-a-half. This, together with the disaster of the war, the crying social crisis, the continued underground activity of the Brotherhood, and the revelation of scandals in the handling of military supplies to the armed forces during the war, created an explosive atmosphere in the country and made the position of the government untenable. Partly for this reason and partly to embarrass the Wafd, the king called for new elections. In the absence of alternatives, he expected the Wafd to win, but he hoped at the same time to see it trapped between the British trenches in the Suez Zone and the highly agitated public. His expectations were

justified. The Wafd returned to power, and, in the hope of expiating its spotty past and recapturing the leadership of the national struggle, it risked the danger of nationalist agitation in times of social crisis, which all parties had tried to avoid before, denounced unilaterally the Treaty of 1936, whipped nationalist feeling into hysteria and launched an ill-prepared guerrilla war against the British forces. In the meantime, as part of a political bargain, it restored the legal status of the Muslim Brotherhood. But this time the forces that it unleashed were beyond its control. After an irresponsible order by the Minister of the Interior had led to a clash in the Canal Zone which cost the lives of scores of policemen, the wrath of the masses was turned inward and erupted in the burning of Cairo. The king had at last found the excuse he needed to dismiss the Wafd, but the ensuing crisis led directly to the July revolution and the complete overthrow of the whole regime.'

*From EGYPT IN SEARCH OF POLITICAL COMMUNITY. By Nadav Safran. (HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS.) LONDON: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. (54s. net.)*

## THE CULT OF ART

*[From Harvard comes a study of the image of the artist, central to the Romantic belief in art as the highest human activity, from the late eighteenth century to the nineteenth-century Decadents.]*

'PROUST's way, the third attempt to solve the Romantic dilemma, lies between Rimbaud's affirmation of the personality and Mallarmé's rejection of it. If we read *A la recherche du temps perdu* in a certain light, we see that it is in the line of Rousseau's *Confessions*. Proust defined the narcissistic attitude, the attentive examination of the deepest levels of the self, as the true prerogative of the artist. He defined "the artistic sense" as the "submission to internal reality," the only true reality: ". . . at every moment the artist must listen to his instinct: this makes art the most real of things, the most austere school of life, and the true Last Judgment." Proust's novel is of course not merely another confession in the manner of Rousseau. The artist must do more than exhibit himself to the public. He must transform his life of sensation and instinct into a work of art, and not as the Decadent, Robert de Montesquiou or Jean Floressas des Esseintes, accomplished this feat. Proust rejected the attitude of the celibates of art, the dilettantes who use art as masturbatory self-amusement, who

"extract nothing from their impressions, grow old, useless and unsatisfied." Only through the discovery of the artist's true vocation, "to create a work of art," could the lost time of dilettantism and inutility be redeemed. Proust rediscovered the cult of art in its finest form, the ritual in which the work of art is the offering that assures the artist's salvation. This was the faith of Flaubert; it was the faith that Baudelaire expressed, in his usual attitude of self-torture, in "Le mauvais Moine":

O moine fainéant! quand saurai-je donc faire  
Du spectacle vivant de ma triste misère  
Le travail de mes mains et l'amour de mes yeux?

The artist constructs the work of art from his life—he must construct the work of art. Only through art, Proust affirmed, could narcissism be transcended: "Only through art are we able to get out of ourselves, to know what another sees of this universe which is not the same as ours, and of which the landscapes would otherwise have remained as unknown to us as those there may be on the moon." Yet the transcendence of the reader's or the spectator's narcissism is at the same time the triumph of the artist's personality. The man who reads a book or looks at a painting gradually accepts the world as the artist has seen it, and in turn sees the world as the artist has expressed it: "Women pass in the street, different from those in the past, since they are Renoirs, those Renoirs in which we formerly refused to see women." The artist becomes a demiurge and creates the world anew, shaping it in accord with his own vision.

'As Joyce, whose method of creating a work of art out of his life closely resembled Proust's way, would have it, Icarus, the young exhibitionist, may become Daedalus, the fabulous artificer who left the labyrinth as a monument to his creative genius. Proust and Joyce reaffirmed Horace's cry of triumph, "Exegi monumentum aere perennius," as the essential cry of the artist. The true fate of the adolescent Icarus may simply be to grow up.'

*From ICARUS: THE IMAGE OF THE ARTIST IN FRENCH ROMANTICISM. By Maurice Z. Schroder. (HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS.) LONDON: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. (44s. net.)*

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